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License/ID Laws are Changing!

Know Before You Go!



Several major changes have recently been made to the License/ID law that will affect all Massachusetts drivers. The RMV's website has been updated and changes will be made to the next printing of the Driver's Manual. Please read this information and be aware of the changes and their effective dates. The legal changes are listed below and are described in this document.

- New Mobile Phone / Texting Law (Safe Driving Law)
- Three Surchargeable Events Suspension (Safe Driving Law)
- Required In-Person Renewals for Operators Over 75 (Safe Driving Law)
- Massachusetts Rider Education Program Basic Rider Course
Required for Motorcycle Junior Operators
- Minimum Age for Massachusetts IDs Lowered to 14
- Donation to the Organ and Tissue Donor Registration Fund

Mobile Phone / Texting Law (Safe Driving Law)

The following law is effective September 30, 2010

Sending or Reading Electronic Messages

Operators cannot use any mobile electronic device (see Chapter 155 of the Acts of 2010 for the definition of mobile electronic device) to write, send, or read an electronic message (including text messages, emails, instant messages, or accessing the Internet) while operating a vehicle. This law applies to drivers of all ages.

*Violation Penalties (for all ages):

- 1st offense - \$100 fine
- 2nd offense - \$250 fine
- 3rd or subsequent offense - \$500 fine

Mobile Phone Usage by Operators Under 18

Operators under the age of 18 cannot use any mobile electronic device for any reason while operating a motor vehicle. The only exception is for reporting an emergency.

*Violation Penalties:

- 1st offense - \$100 fine, 60-day license suspension, and a required attitudinal retraining course
- 2nd offense - \$250 fine, 180-day license suspension
- 3rd or subsequent offense - \$500 fine, one-year suspension

Unsafe or Impeded Operation Due to the Use of a Mobile Phone

Operators over the age of 18 can use mobile telephones for calls as long as one hand remains on the steering wheel at all times. However, the use of a mobile telephone must not interfere with driving and can't be used for texting.

*Violation Penalties (for all ages):

- 1st offense - \$35 fine
- 2nd offense (within 12 months) - \$75 fine
- 3rd offense (within 12 months) - \$150 fine

***NOTE: It is not a violation if the vehicle is parked in an area of the road not meant for driving.**

Negligent Operation and Injury from Mobile Phone Use

Personal injury or property damage caused by negligent operation of a motor vehicle is a **criminal offense**. If you crashed because you were using a mobile electronic device, you will face criminal charges. In addition to the criminal charges, you will face loss of license as described below.

Violation Penalties:

Junior Operators (under 18 years of age)

- 1st offense – 180-day suspension
- 2nd or subsequent offense (within three years) – One-year suspension

18 Years or Older

- 1st offense – 60-day suspension
- 2nd or subsequent offense (within three years) – One-year suspension

Three Surchargeable Events Suspension (Safe Driving Law)

Effective September 30, 2010, three surchargeable events in a two-year period may cause a license suspension. A surchargeable event is a motor vehicle violation or an at-fault accident. If you get a third surchargeable event, you must complete a Driver Retraining Course within 90 days of the date of the notification you receive from the RMV. If you do not, your license will be suspended. You must complete the course each time you get a third surchargeable event within two years. It does not matter if you have already taken the course. See the Surchargeable Events section on page 46 of the Driver's Manual for more information.

Required In-Person Renewals for Operators Over 75 (Safe Driving Law)

Effective September 30, 2010, operators 75 years of age or older can only renew a driver's license at an RMV branch. The operator must either pass a vision test or present a completed Vision Screening Certificate.

Massachusetts Rider Education Program Basic Rider Course Required for Motorcycle Junior Operators

Effective immediately, a junior operator under the age of 18 must complete the Massachusetts Rider Education Program (MREP) basic rider course to get a Class M (motorcycle) license or endorsement. When you complete this program, you do not need to take a Class M road test. See the Massachusetts Rider Education Program section on page 26 of the Driver's Manual for more information on MREP.

Minimum Age for Massachusetts IDs Lowered to 14

Effective October 25, 2010, the minimum age for getting a Massachusetts ID will be lowered from 16 to 14. The applicant must be a Massachusetts resident and must not have a valid driver's license from Massachusetts or anywhere else. For a list of the documents you must present to obtain a Massachusetts ID, see the Identification Requirements section, which begins on page 9 of the Driver's Manual.

Donation to the Organ and Tissue Donor Registration Fund

Coming soon, when you use the Internet to renew your license or ID, or order a duplicate license or ID, you will have the choice to give \$2 to the Organ and Tissue Donor Registration Fund. This \$2 will be added to the renewal or duplicate fee. See the Organ and Tissue Donor Program section on page 41 of the Driver's Manual or visit www.mass.gov/rmv for more information about organ and tissue donation.